

“GAY JESUS” COMING TO BROADWAY

This fall, the Manhattan Theatre Club is scheduled to produce a Terrence McNally play, “Corpus Christi,” that makes reference to Jesus having sex with the twelve apostles. When the Catholic League learned of this play, it immediately voiced its objections; its news release was picked up by newspapers across the country. This, in turn, led to several interviews on radio and TV, all handled by Rick Hinshaw, the league’s communications director.

The response to the league’s concerns, both from the public and from those in the media, was overwhelmingly positive (even Joan Rivers was unequivocally on our side). The league’s next step was to ask playwright McNally, winner of three Tonys, to alter the script. Below is the text of the letter that Catholic League president William Donohue sent to McNally:

“In your upcoming play, ‘Corpus Christi,’ the script calls for an offstage comment by the apostles regarding their having sex with Jesus. As you know, this part of your work is deeply offensive to Christians. That is why I am asking you to delete any such reference from the script.

“If this part of the play is not central to your work, then you should have no problem honoring this request. On the other hand, if you insist that you must not excise this segment because it is integral to the play, then the intent and effect of ‘Corpus Christi’ will be evident for all to see.

“You have earned a reputation for being a creative playwright. Surely your status would not suffer by acceding to this request, and indeed it may well be enhanced. The obverse, however, is also true: by failing to amend the script, you will have sent a message to the public that is hardly

endearing.

“In the spirit of civility and community, I appeal to you to make the requested change. Thank you for your consideration.”

Donohue's letter was released to the press and a copy was sent to McNally's agent as well. News reports said McNally was not going to back down and that is why the league wrote to those federal, state and local officials who have oversight responsibilities for funding of the arts; the production company receives monies from all three layers of government.